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Washington Report

Viet Nam Optimism Marks Dodd Interview

By ROBERT D. BYRNES

WASHINGTON — Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D-Conn., Sunday aired claims that defeatism and discouragement about the situation in South Viet Nam are not justified. His office here released the text of an interview with Marguerite Higgins, a foreign correspondent who has been in South Viet Nam. Miss Higgins appeared on a similar program with Dodd for telecast in Connecticut two weeks ago. Dodd, in the Senate, has called for United States support of the present South Viet Nam regime and more aggressive action against the Communists in North Viet Nam lest Communists get control of South Viet Nam and then other countries so as to make the Pacific a "Red ocean." In this he is in disagreement with other senators who have urged the United States pull out of Viet Nam.

Miss Higgins said in the Dodd interview that she thinks the coup d'etat that resulted in the overthrow and death of Diem was the result of United States pressures and United States policy. She involved Henry Cabot Lodge, United States ambassador to South Viet Nam, and now a possible Republican nominee for President in the overthrow.

Ambassador Lodge, she said, had ordered the CIA to take a poll of Vietnamese generals "to see who might be ready to turn talk into reality." This was on the same day, Aug. 25, she said, when the Voice of America broadcast what was interpreted as an invitation to the Vietnamese military to take over if they could. While nothing happened then, the revolt then became inevitable, according to Miss Higgins. In response to a question by Dodd she said "We are, without any question in my own mind, responsible" for the overthrow of the Diem government.

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